

HUNTING FOR FABRICIAN TYPES

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During the summer of 1950 while my husband was in Europe to attend the International Botanical Congress held in Stockholm, I had a chance to visit some of the European museums for a short time. My main interest was in looking up old Fabrician types. When I had been in Paris in 1925, M. Pierre Lesne had shown me some Fabrician cotypes, as he called them, from the Bosc collection. But when I asked for them last summer, no one at the Paris museum knew anything about such a collection. For one thing, there is no one there working on Chrysomelidae, of which the Bosc collection chiefly consisted. Prof. Jeannel, spending his mornings at the administration building, did not come to the entomological museum until after lunch, and then he was busy with other groups. Neither M. Descarpentries nor M. Colas was concerned with the Chrysomelidae, but M. Descarpentries obligingly took me up to the attic to hunt for this collection. The attic is a long open one, running the length of the building and with frequent window alcoves with a table before the window on each side. Down the length of this long dim room range two rows of double cases, filled with paper insect boxes. There are others along the walls. This collection is arranged first according to families and then according to individual collectors. There are collections of individuals such as Sedillot, Sicard, Abeille de Perrin, Demaison, Fairmaire, Rothschild, Bedel and many others. Cases 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 34 are of Chrysomelidae. M. Descarpentries hunted for some time but was unable to locate the Bosc collection and left me to continue the search. M. Colas later told my daughter who understood French conversation much better than I, that her mother was possessed of the "sacré feu." Howbeit, they most kindly left me undisturbed and in full possession of the attic for the two weeks that I stayed there. I spent the rest of that first day going through insect boxes and noting the great amount of mostly undetermined, well mounted and labelled specimens. Down near the bottom of case 9, which contained many miscel-

laneous boxes such as the *Biologia* cotypes and Lefèvre's Eumolpids, I found two old red paper boxes labelled Bosc Collection.

Bosc, a French naturalist living from 1759 to 1828, was a close friend of Fabricius, with whom he shared his collection. He spent two years in America, living near Charleston, S. C., at the garden where Michaux had established a nursery for plants to ship back to France. When Bosc returned to Paris he distributed his specimens among the naturalists of that day and both Fabricius and Olivier described beetles from Bosc's collections. I found there the cotypes of approximately 30 species of American Chrysomelidae, and made full notes on them which I hope will appear shortly in a report on that collection.

From Paris I travelled to Stockholm and worked at the Riksmuseum on the outskirts of that city, a beautiful large light museum surrounded by gardens of flowers. Dr. René Malaise made me welcome and used to dispense tea and cheese at lunch time with much entomological gossip interspersed with theories on the distribution of animals. There were no Fabrician types but what formed the nucleus of the museum, the Linnaean collection of insects. It is a good-sized, well-preserved collection, sacredly kept. I was most interested in Boheman's and Weise's types of Chrysomelidae from South America on which I spent several days taking notes.

The largest collection of Fabrician types that I saw was at Copenhagen. Mrs. Zimsen is working there on that collection with a view to publishing on the authentic Fabrician types there and in other collections. She expected to have Fabricius' own collection from Kiel shipped to her for study last fall, and I have since heard that this has happened. She most generously gave up her desk to me as space was limited in the museum. I noted her fine new Leitz microscope and she told me that it was a German war reparation. Dr. S. Tuxen, also, was most cordial to me, and Dr. Elizabeth Deichmann of the Museum of Comparative Zoology who was home for the summer working there, took pains to show me the country about, especially the King's Deer Park, with its huge old beech forest.

In Amsterdam I hunted for an entomological collection at the Natural History Museum near the Zoological Park, but was told it had been moved out to a building beyond the Indian Museum.

I walked along a canal a long way and finally found the place and was admitted to a great building with huge, high rooms, each heated by a tiny iron stove. There was not a large collection there, although a great many Indonesian beetles.

The remainder of the summer was spent at the British Museum in South Kensington. I arrived early in August on a bank holiday but was admitted to the entomological quarters by R. B. Benson, who was on duty that holiday. He let me into the Coleoptera room and left me quite alone with the collection in that great room at a visitor's desk. I had not been working there long before a gray-haired man appeared, looked at me questioningly, and introduced himself as Sir Guy Marshall. Although retired he works there every day as does G. E. Bryant. It was a great pleasure to be only a few desks away from these vigorous old-timers, and to have daily chats with them. Sir Guy Marshall, although 80 years old, was going for a 3-months collecting trip to South Africa a few weeks later. I had been looking forward to meeting Mr. Maulik, but was told that he died rather suddenly a fortnight before. The collection of Chrysomelidae at the British Museum contains type after type. Mr. Bryant has arranged it in the beautiful mahogany drawers with ample spacing. The Banks collection of Fabrician species, kept separately, is a sizable one containing many types. There are about 30 species of American Chrysomelidae in it. I was most reluctant to leave the British Museum in September when I was booked to sail home.

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A second circular on the Ninth International Congress of Entomology has been issued. It contains complete information regarding the program, trips, ladies' program, accommodations, fees, etc. Anyone interested in this information should contact Prof. J. Chester Bradley, Department of Entomology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.

R.H.A.